# MANAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION FOR CULTURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT:  A CASE STUDY OF THAI PHUAN ETHNIC GROUP, BAN MI DISTRICT, LOP BURI PROVINCE, THAILAND

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## ABSTRACT

Management and participation are essential for modern organizations because every organization needs to be well-designed, and well-adjusted to manage its activities. Cultural tourism industry is no exception. The purposes of this research were: (1) to study the community's participation needs in cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province and (2) to develop the guidelines of cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province by using participation action research (PAR). The samples were 10 local government administrators, 15 community leaders and 15 Thai Phuan successors and members of the community who specialized in the history of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group chosen through purposive sampling and 391 residents in 5 sub-districts (Ban-gluey, Chiang-nga, Bansai, Phonthong and Hinpag) selected through quota sampling. The Mixed Method Research (MMR) was employed for data collection. This included an in-depth interview, focus group, questionnaires, and community forum. The research study was based on the POLC Model and tourism management. The quantitative data were systematically analyzed by percentage and mean, and the qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis. The findings showed that the local government administrators were ready to participate in developing community to be Thai Phuan tourist attractions in the future. The needs of residents for taking part in management and participation for cultural tourist attraction development were at a high level. With regard to the guidelines for cultural tourism development, it was recommended that a committee responsible for tourism be established. Government sectors should allocate enough budget for supporting cultural tourism activities such as restoring roads and facilities, putting up large road signs, arranging cultural tourism activities, approving public relations and developing the potential of local tour guides.

**KEYWORDS:** Management, Participation, Cultural Tourist Attractions, Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, POLC Model

## INTRODUCTION

As noted by Walle (1998, p.9), most generally, cultural tourism refers to tourism activities that are hired around culture. Taking many forms, cultural tourism resonates from curiosity about people and respect for their achievement. One component involves what may be called "high culture"; thus many people gravitate to sophisticated places in order to participate in cultural achievements and opportunities that can be sampled there.

Presently, cultural tourism is a large industry with both global and local implications. It involves travel, communications, entertainment, and educational sectors and has consequences for political, economic, and social life. As cultural tourism has grown, the needs for more systematic scholarly analysis and discussion are increasing.

A developing literature can enable professionals to examine the ethical implications of cultural tourism, issues of cultural representation, the extent and distribution of economic benefits and the differential ability of those involved to move in and shape touristic experiences. (Walle, 1998, p. xiii)

To accomplish the task of promoting cultural tourist attractions in Ban Mi District, this study was conducted on the topic "Management and Participation for Cultural Tourism Development: A Case Study of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province,Thailand.

Thai Phuan people live in many sub-districts, such as, Ban-gluey, Chiang-nga, Bansai, Phonthong and Hinpag in Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province.

These Thai Phuan people form Thai Phuan Ethnic Group clubs. Some of these sub-districts form Thai Phuan Ethnic Group culture council, such as, Ban-gluey and Phonthong. Thai Phuan people have their own language, beliefs, entertainments and folklores, such as, Kamfah and Saikrajad folklores. From the preliminary interviews of stakeholders in the studied areas, it is found that nowadays Thai Phuan Ethnic Group is weak in their special characteristics in all aspects, including lacking of information and systematic knowledge management.

From the aforementioned discussion, it is clear that there is a need to study about the problems of management and participation for Cultural Tourism Development in Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province in order to motivate Thai Phuan Ethnic Group communities to be conscious of local conservation. The results of the research will be useful guidelines for planning and for developing tourist attractions of Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province in the future.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purposes of this research were:

To study the community's participation needs in cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province.

To develop the guidelines of cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province by using participation action research.

Two research questions addressed in this study were:

**Research Question 1:** How much do the stakeholder's need to participate in cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province?

**Research Question 2:** What are the guidelines of cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section the literature on cultural tourism, management and participation are reviewed.

### Cultural Tourism

As defined by the World Tourism Organization (WTO), tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in place outside their usual environment for not more than one year for leisure, business and other purposes. On the other hand, the cultural tourism is more about introducing the natural assets like sites and monuments and focused

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on the visitor's motivations and perceptions. The typical types of sites or attraction which are considered to attract cultural tourist are archeological sites and museums, architectures like ruins, famous building, or whole towns. The art, sculpture, crafts, galleries, festivals, events are also included. Music and dance whether classical. Folk, or contemporary; drama in theatre, films, and even the dramatists are part of the natural heritage that can be introduce to the visitors. The language and literature study, tours, events, religious festivals, pilgrimages, cultures and sub cultures are the other attractions that the visitors might be interested are also offered in cultural tourism program (Uger, Gurer, and Sat, 2006)

The importance of heritage and reasons for preserving heritage can be described into four aspects, namely, social, economical, scientific and political. Concerning social significance, heritage refers to personal and collective identity people and society have, which can lead to a sense of belonging. In terms of economic importance, heritage is preserved because of its value for tourism and recreation. Being a large scale business, heritage tourism can generate incomes for the sites either from visitors spending or sponsorship from various stakeholders. Further mainly heritage also has scientific and educational importance since heritage attractions such as temples, national parks may have rare habitat and endangered species which will be useful for scientific researchers as well as the monuments and wonders of the worlds creates more opportunities to the scientists and researchers to find out the exact meaning of the past (An Analysis of Cultural Heritage Tourism Tourism Essay, 2015). In terms of political importance, heritage may serve political ends as the conservation and interpretation of certain heritage attractions may serve to underline a particular version of history or to promote existing political values. Cultural tourism brings benefits and weaknesses to the nation's cultural heritage. It can be concluded that cultural tourism will bring more advantages than weaknesses. First of all, cultural tourism let tourists understand the local culture and know how to respect the local people and heritage. Secondly, tourism can create a range of jobs to the local labors.  Thirdly, tourism can lead to better environment because the government will seriously reduce the environment pollution.

**Management**

Management is a universal phenomenon which is a very popular and widely used term. Management concepts apply equally to public, private, not of profit, religious organizations, large corporations and small entrepreneurial firms. All organizations involved in management because management helps and directs various efforts toward their purposes. According to Bateman and Snell (2013, p.14), management is the process of working with people and resources to accomplish organizational goals. As defined by (Williams, 2006, p.4), management is fundamental to the effective operation of work organization, such as making plans and decisions about the future needs of business, cost-effective use of resources though efficient organization and control and getting the best out of people to achieve objectives. Schermerhorn (2008, p. 17) remarks that management is the process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling  the use of resources to accomplish performance goals. The successful manager capably performs four basic functions: planning, organizing, leading and controlling that make up the management process are described in the following section:

Planning is the process of setting objectives and determining objectives and determining what should be done to accomplish them.

Organizing is the process of assigning tasks, allocation resources, and arranging activities to implement plans.

Leading is the process of arousing enthusiasm and directing effort toward organization goals.

Controlling is the process of measuring performance and taking action to ensure desired results.

Management is, therefore, an individual of a group of individuals that accept responsibilities to run an organization. They plan, organize, lead, and control all the essential activities of the organization. Management does not do the work themselves. They motivate others to do the work and co-ordinate all the work for achieving goals of organizations.

**Participation**

There is no agreement among planners and professionals about the contribution of community participation to improve the lives of people, particularly the poor and disadvantaged. Some completely dismiss its value altogether, while others believe that it is the magic bullet that will ensure improvements, especially in the context of poverty alleviation. Despite the lack of agreement, community participation has continued to be promoted as a key to development (World Bank, 1996). Thus, participation can be defined as the collective activities that individuals may be involved in. The associations people form between and for themselves are at the heart of social participation. It also refers to the individual choices and actions that people make as part of their life and that are statement of the kind of society they want to live in, such as, preserving cultural of heritages (Institute for Volunteering Research, 2010). The objectives of participation are that participation activities may be motivated from an administrative perspective or citizen perspective on a governmental, corporate or social level. From the administrative viewpoint, participation can build public support for activities. It can educate the public about an agency's activities. It can also facilitate useful information exchange regarding local conditions. From the citizen's perspective, participation enables individuals and groups to influence agency decision in a representational manner. How well participation can influence the relation between citizen and their local government, how it increases trust and boosts people's willingness to participate (Eva-Maria Verfurth, 2013).

Achieving community participation requires the direct, face to face involvement of citizens in social development and ultimate control over decisions that affect their own welfare. Since participation must involve the whole community, the disadvantage must be empowered to take an active part in the political process. Furthermore, since participation must take place on a direct interpersonal basis, the unit for participation and the primary forum for expression of views must be the small local community (Midgley, 1986).

Participation in cultural participation in communities is a social interaction occurring as a progression for the community, rather than that of the individuals. Participation in these communities can serve as a learning service. This learning rouges from everyday activities, in which community members gain a new skill to complete a task or participate through social events to keep their culture alive.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

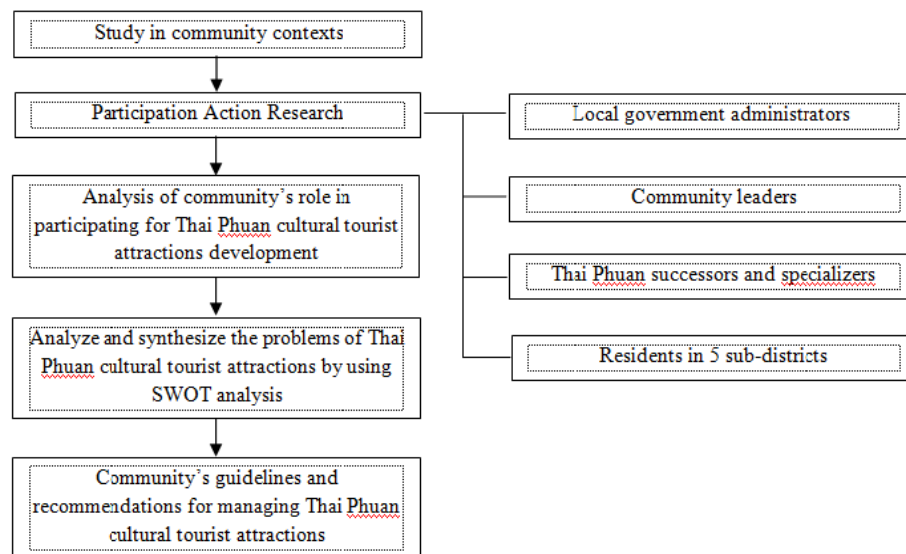The conceptual framework of the research is shown in Figure 1

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Method

Quantitative and qualitative methods were applied to conduct this study. The data were collected through a field study, in-depth interviews, focus group, community forum and questionnaires. The quantitative data were systematically analyzed by descriptive statistics (percentage and mean). The qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis.

### Population and Sample

The samples in this research were divided into 4 groups: (1) 10 administrators of or local organizations in Lop Buri Province, (2) 15 community leaders, (3) 15 Thai Phuan successors and members of the community who specialized in the history of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, and (4) 391 residents in sub-district Ban-gluey, Chiang-nga, Bansai, Phonthong and Hinpag.

### Research Instruments

The instruments adopted in this study were as follows:

The semi-structure interview questions for in-depth interviews to find the ways of life of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, including environment analysis (SWOT analysis) of the studied areas: Ban-gluey, Chiang-nga, Bansia, Phon thong, and Hinpag Subdistricts.

The open-ended questions for focus group techniques to find the ways of life of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, including environment analysis (SWOT analysis) of the studied areas: Ban-gluey, Chiang-nga, Bansia, Phon thong, and Hinpag sub-districts.

A questionnaire to assess the participating needs of residents in cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: 1) general information about the residents, and 2) participating needs in cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group. There were 21 questions in this part, using a 5-point rating scale.

**Data Analysis**

The quantitative data were systematically analyzed by descriptive statistics (percentage and mean). The qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research findings were described in detail as follows:

The research identified community's role by three groups of stakeholders of the cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province, 15 community leaders, 15 Thai Phuan successors and members of the community who specialized in the history of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group by using a field study, in-depth interview, and focus group techniques. The results reveal that there were cooperative planning between district organizations and local organizations. The planning focused on the activities to support Thai Phan cultural tourism development. Most of the sub-districts in the studied areas have established organizations whose functions related to Thai Phuan cultures and they are ready to participate in developing community to be Thai Phuan tourist attractions in the future.

The reason attributed to this may be Thai government sets up its policies for enhancing cultural tourism of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group.

The researcher evaluated 391 respondents' needs to participate in cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group by questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: 1) Bio-data information of respondents and 2) the participating needs in cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group.

- **Bio-Data Information:** The demographic data obtained from the questionnaire included gender, age, marital status, educational level, occupation, and average income per month. It was found that the majority of the respondents was female (55.80%), age was between 45-54 years (25.83 %), marital status was married (63.94 %), educational level was primary school (30.95 %), occupation was farmer (28.39 %), and average income per month was lower than 10,000 baht (63.17 %).

- The participating needs in cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group: The second section of the questionnaire was to assess the level of needs to participate in cultural tourist attraction management of the respondents. The questionnaire aimed to obtain information in five aspects: 1) Participating for planning 2) participating for organizing 3) Participating for leading 4) Participating for controlling, and 5) Participating for managing tourism attractions. The findings from the questionnaire are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Participating Needs in Cultural Tourist Attraction Management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group**

| Participating Need Aspects | Level of Participating Needs | | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| | $\bar{x}$ | S.D. | |
| Participating in planning | 3.81 | .657 | High |
| Participating in organizing | 3.93 | .699 | High |
| Participating in leading | 3.88 | .673 | High |
| Participating in controlling | 3.82 | .727 | High |
| Participating in managing tourist attractions | 3.99 | .701 | High |
| Scores | 3.89 | .628 | High |

Table 1 reveals that the respondents' needs in cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group in each of the five aspects were at a high level. Participating in managing tourist attractions scored the highest while participation scored the lowest. The overall score was at a high level.

To develop the guidelines of cultural tourist attraction management of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province, the problems of Thai Phuan cultural tourist attractions were analyzed and synthesized using SWOT analysis. The three stakeholder groups of the cultural tourist attractions of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group (10 administrators, 15 community leaders, 15 Thai Phuan successors and specializes in Thai Phuan's history) participated in SWOT analysis by focus group technique. The results are displayed in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2: SWOT Analysis: Internal Environment Analysis**

| Internal Environments | |
|---|---|
| **Strengths (S)** | **Weaknesses (W)** |
| Important traditions having been conserved | Narrow roads to enter the village |
| Many ancient buildings | Not ready to provide services for tourists |
| Many famous Thai Phuan's products | No tourist information center |
| Having Thai Phuan local wisdom | Lack of public relations office to organize traditional fairs |
| | Conflicts among committee members |
| | No arrangement for concrete cultural tourism |

Table 2 shows that there were many strengths for Thai Phuan's cultural tourism, such as important traditions having been conserved, many ancient buildings, many famous Thai Phuan's products and having Thai Phuan local wisdom. However, there are many weaknesses, such as, narrow roads to enter the village, not ready to provide services for tourists, no tourist information center, lack of public relations office to organize traditional fairs, etc.

**Table 3: SWOT Analysis: External Environment Analysis**

| External Environments | |
|---|---|
| **Opportunities (S)** | **Threats (T)** |
| Government's policies for promoting and supporting internal tourism | Lowland areas of Ban Mi being flooded every year |
| Supporting budget from sub-district administrative organizations for Thai Phuan traditional fairs | Poor economy affecting cultural tourism |
| | Government's promotion not covering cultural tourism |

It can be seen from Table 3 that there were two opportunities for fostering Thai Phuan's cultural tourism: there are government's policies for promoting and supporting internal tourism, and there is also supporting budget from sub-district administrative organizations for Thai Phuan traditional fairs. The results also reveal some threats. First, there are lowland areas of Ban Mi are flooded every year. Second, poor economy can have an impact on cultural tourism. Third, the government's promotion does not cover cultural tourism.

The opportunities and threats obtained from the focus group were, then, discussed in the community forum, aiming to gather the opinions of the stakeholders (10 administrators, 15 community leaders, 15 Thai Phuan successors and members of the community who specialized in the history of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group about the guidelines for managing cultural tourist attractions of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, Ban Mi District, Lop Buri Province, and the effects of developing Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, to be cultural tourist attraction were also discussed. The results are as follows:

- The guidelines for developing cultural tourist attractions were 1) forming the committee of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group's cultural tourism 2) supporting enough budget for Thai Phuan's activities 3) improving places and facilities for tourists 4) improving the channel of public relations by using government mass media, and 5) developing service potential of stakeholders.

- The development of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group, Ban Mi district, Lop Buri Province to be cultural tourist attractions toward community resulted in both positive and negative effects. The positive effects were increasing residents income from selling products and services (food, souvenirs, gasoline stations etc.), developing infrastructure in the studied areas, including small business investment. The negative effects were pollutions (air pollution, garbage, etc.) and crime that could happen to tourists.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, it is concluded that there is cooperative planning between sub-district organizations and local organizations. The planning focused on activities supporting Thai Phuan cultural tourism development. Most sub-districts in the studied areas have established organizations whose functions related to Thai Phuan culture. The needs of the residents to participate in management and participation for cultural tourism development were rated at a high level, with respect to individual aspects of the study: participating in managing, organizing, leading, controlling and planning tourism. Secondly, the findings confirm that a committee responsible for cultural tourist attractions in the studied areas should be established. Government sectors should allocate enough budgets for supporting cultural tourism activities, restoring roads and facilities, putting up large road signs, setting cultural tourism activity programs, approving public relations and developing local tour guides' potential by training.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### General Recommendations

To make cultural tourist attractions more interesting, stakeholders should consider the following five aspects:

### Management

Management aspect involves planning, organizing, leading and controlling aspects as follows:

- Planning

There should be cooperative planning between government organizations responsible for tourism in Lop Buri province to form a committee to develop cultural tourist attractions, and appropriate budget should be supported by the government.

- Organizing

The government should support budget and personnel to sub-district administrative organizations to foster Thai Phuan's traditions.

- Leading

The government should motivate or force the community leaders, including the Chief Executives of sub-district administrative organizations to persuade the residents to participate in cultural activities, such as a seminar on Thai Phuan cultural tourism.

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- Controlling

The government's administrators in all levels of organizations should take action, and the evaluation of the project should be highlighted. Also, the result should be taken into consideration to solve the problems.

**Attractions**

- There should be magnificent and unique places, such as, Thai Phuan Cultural Center of Ban Mi District. The center may be supported by the governors, including enough budget allocation.

- Thai Phuan tradition activities in festival seasons should be held, and there should be a walking street market on both sides of the street leading to Wat Bansai to sell community products and souvenirs.

- Thai Phuan Cultural Museum should be established to display Thai Phuan's ways of living exhibition for tourists.

- Ancient buildings should be conserved, particularly those aged over 200 years, with a financial support from the government sectors.

**Facilities**

The facility aspect concerns the provision of facilities for tourists, such as food shops, souvenir shops, toilets and cleaning staffs. In addition, there should be an *OTOP* shop in each of the studied areas to be the center for selling community products.

**Accessing Cultural Tourist Attractions**

There should be guideboards to facilitate tourists' visits and to persuade them to buy community products. Moreover, the district information center should be set up to provide information for tourists.

**Participation**

There should be training workshops or seminars on Thai Phuan traditions and culture to cultivate good conscience for students and people. More interestingly, the campaign for students and people to dress in Thai Phuan style as well as to promote the use of the Thai Phuan language is another aspect to encourage participation of the community.

**Recommendations for Future Studies**

The findings of this study may be generalizable to other contexts. Thus future studies can be conducted on the following topics: 1) the feasibility study of the establishment of Thai Phuan's ways of life learning center, 2) the management and participation for cultural development of other ethnic groups in Ban Mi, Lop Buri Province, and 3) the management and participation for cultural tourism of Thai Phuan Ethnic Group in other provinces.

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